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"Make Sure This Happens!"

How Rumsfeld Micromanaged Torture

By Andrew Cockburn

When Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld boasted, as he did frequently, of his unrelenting focus on the war on terror, his audience would have been startled, maybe even shocked, to discover the activities that Rumsfeld found necessary to supervise in minute detail. Close command and control of far away events from the Pentagon were not limited to the targeting of bombs and missiles. Thanks to breakthroughs in communications, the interrogation and torture of prisoners could be monitored on a real time basis as well.

The first prisoner to experience such attention from Rumsfeld's office, or the first that we know about, was an American citizen, John Walker Lindh, a young man from California whose fascination with Islam had led him to enlist in the Taliban. Shortly thereafter, he and several hundred others surrendered to the Northern Alliance warlord Abdu Rashid Dostum in return for a promise of safe passage. Dostum broke the deal, herding the prisoners into a ruined fortress near Mazar-e-Sharif. Lindh managed to survive, though wounded, and eventually fell into the hands of the CIA and Special Forces, who proceeded to interrogate him.

According to documents later unearthed by Richard Serrano of the *Los Angeles Times*, a Special Forces intelligence officer was informed by a Navy admiral monitoring events in Mazar-e-Sharif that "the Secretary of Defense's Counsel (lawyer William Haynes) has authorized him to 'take the gloves off" and ask whatever he wanted." In the course of the questioning Lindh, who had a bullet in his leg, was stripped naked, blindfolded, handcuffed, and bound to a stretcher with duct tape. In a practice that would become more familiar at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq 18 months later, smiling soldiers posed for pictures next to the naked prisoner. A Navy medic later testified that he had been told by the lead military interrogator that "sleep deprivation, cold and hunger might be employed" during Lindh's interrogations. Meanwhile, his responses to the questioning, which ultimately went on for days, were relayed back to Washington, according to the documents disclosed to Serrano, every hour, hour after hour. Someone very important clearly wanted to know all the details.

Lindh was ultimately tried and sentenced in a U.S. court, but Rumsfeld was in no mood to extend any kind of legal protection to other captives. As the first load of prisoners arrived at the new military prison camp at Guantanamo, Cuba, on January 11, 2002, he declared them "unlawful combatants" who "do not have any rights under the Geneva Conventions." In fact, the Geneva Conventions provide explicit protection to anyone taken prisoner in an international armed conflict, even when they are not entitled to actual prisoner of war status, but no one at that time was in a mood to contradict the all-powerful secretary of defense.

A year after Haynes, his chief counsel, had passed the message that interrogators should "take the gloves off" when questioning the hapless John Walker Lindh and report the results on an hourly basis, Rumsfeld was personally deciding on whether interrogators could use "stress positions" (an old CIA technique) like making prisoners stand for up to four hours, or exploit "individual phobias, such as fear of dogs, to induce stress," or strip them naked, or question them for 28 hours at a stretch, without sleep, or use "a wet towel and dripping water to induce the misperception of suffocation". These and other methods, euphemistically dubbed "counter-resistance techniques" in Pentagon documents that always avoided the word "torture," were outlined in an "action memo" submitted on November 27, 2002, for Rumsfeld's approval by Haynes. The lawyer noted that Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith and General Richard Myers (respectively deputy defense secretary, under-secretary for policy and chairman of the joint chiefs) had already agreed that Rumsfeld should approve all but the most severe options, such as the wet towel, without restriction. A week later, Rumsfeld scrawled his signature in the "approved" box but added, "However, I stand for 8-10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to 4 hours?"

The answer, of course, was that he could always sit down if he felt like it, and in any case, according to a sworn statement by Air Force Lt. Gen. Randall Schmidt, appointed in 2005 to investigate charges by FBI officials that there had been widespread abuse at Guantanamo, Rumsfeld's signature was merely for the record; he had given verbal approval for the techniques two weeks before. In any event, sitting down at will was not an option available to Mohammed al-Qahtani, a Saudi inmate in Guantanamo who soon began to feel the effects of Rumsfeld's authorization in the most direct way. Qahtani, alleged to have been recruited for the 9/11 hijackings only to fail to gain entry into the U.S., had been under intense questioning for months.

There is no more chilling evidence of just how closely connected Secretary Rumsfeld was to the culture of torture so defiantly adopted by the Bush administra-

(Torture *continued on page 3)*

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"Loyalty" and the Bottom Line

Any Flag Will Do

By Robert Bryce

Good old Frank Gaffney. If the U.S. ever finds itself in dire need of a mad-dog extremist position, he's always ready to lend his voice to the cause. The latest case in point: Gaffney's February 5 column for the *Washington Times* criticizing the oil giant Shell for daring to propose a multibillion-dollar energy deal, in partnership with Spanish energy company Repsol, with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). The deal, which hasn't been finalized, could be worth $10 billion or so. But before we get to the details of Shell's proposal, here's some background.

Amidst the war of words over Iran's nuclear program and its effort to develop nuclear power, the country still has enormous quantities of oil and gas. (Iran is second only to Russia in terms of total gas deposits.) And that gas is attracting investment capital from all over the world. In January alone, the Iranians did several multibillion-dollar deals.

On January 7, NIOC announced the signing of a $16-billion deal with Malaysia's SKS Ventures to develop the Golshan and Fedros gas fields and build plants to produce liquefied natural gas. The 25-year deal will allow Iran to exploit the two fields which together contain about 60 trillion cubic feet of gas. Just for reference, the gas in those two fields is about equal to one-third of all the natural gas reserves in the U.S.A.

On January 26, Iranian officials announced that they had agreed with representatives from Pakistan and India on the pricing formulas for the long-discussed, much-delayed Peace Pipeline, the $7-billion, 1,600-mile pipeline that will carry Iranian gas to Pakistan and India. (The Bush administration opposes the pipeline deal.) Negotiations over the pipeline got stuck over pricing but it appears that the three countries have finally resolved their dispute. The deal confirms that India will look out for its own interests when it comes to energy. In 2005, during the World Petroleum Congress in South Africa, Susil Chandra Tripathi, the secretary of India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, told me that the pipeline deal was inevitable. The U.S. may "want to isolate Iran, but that doesn't mean Iran will quit producing crude oil and gas, or that we will stop buying it."

On January 29, Shell and Repsol announced that they were close to a deal with NIOC on the South Pars field. Shell authorities were skittish about disclosing too many details of the deal for fear that it would upset the Bush administration which is trying to close off foreign investment in Iran.

But Gaffney, a long-time neoconservative and vehement backer of the second Iraq War, would rather engage in demagoguery than bother with the facts. (That was made clear again last week when Gaffney wrote a column for the *Washington Times*, in which he used a fabricated quote from Abraham Lincoln as a justification for his argument that all opponents of the war effort should be hanged.)

To make his point about Shell in Iran, Gaffney quoted Bush's line: "You're either with us or against us." Gaffney went on to declare that the U.S. is engaged in a "War for the Free World" and that numerous international energy companies including Total, Sinopec, Gazprom and ENI, should beware of continuing their investments in Iran. Doing so, he declared, enables the Iranians to "support more terrorists, to kill more Americans and Iraqis, to destabilize the region and to prepare genocidal attacks on this country as well as our ally, Israel." With regard to Iran, the energy companies had "better be with us, or else," Gaffney thundered.

This is serviceable as a rhetorical stance, but it's a mighty selective list of companies. While singling out Shell, Gaffney has chosen to ignore some targets closer to home. For instance, what about Houston-based Marathon Oil? It has been operating in Syria since the 1980s. Last November, it sold most of its interest in a Syrian gas field to Petro-Canada. But Marathon still has a substantial financial interest in a country that Bush has declared is part of the "axis of evil."

What about Houston-based ConocoPhillips? It has substantial interests in Venezuela, which is now run by one of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's closest allies, the populist Hugo Chávez. ConocoPhillips also has substantial stake in Lukoil, one of Russia's biggest oil companies. Venezuela and Russia are both aligned with Iran, not the U.S. By Gaffney's logic, are those oil companies with us or against us?

Oh, and what about Halliburton? Gaffney conveniently forgot to mention the company which provides logistics support for U.S. troops in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and other places. Dick Cheney's old employer – which, until just last year, was still paying Cheney deferred compensation – has been working in Iran for years. In his column, Gaffney points out that Shell has offices in Tehran. So does Halliburton. Despite repeated email requests for information, Halliburton's media affairs office refused to provide any specifics about the value of its contract in Iran, where it is working, or when it will complete its work. In a statement, the company said that it "intends to wind up its work in Iran and not enter into any other future contracts." (Other reports estimate that Halliburton will be in Iran until 2009.)

All of which brings up the obvious question: is Halliburton for us or against us?

Neocons like Gaffney long for a simpler world in which the U.S.A. dominates every facet of the marketplace, particularly with regard to energy. The problem is that the world's hunger for energy cannot be stopped. Iran's oil and gas resources are just too big for it to be marginalized.

Nuclear program or not, Iran is emerging as a winner in the wake of the second Iraq War and no amount of posturing by the U.S. will change that fact. CP

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(**Torture** *continued from page 1)*
tion than Schmidt's 55-page testimony, which at times takes on an informal, almost emotional tone. Schmidt is adamant that Rumsfeld intended the techniques "for Mister Kahtani (sic) number one". And so Qahtani's jailers now began forcing him to stand for long periods, isolating him, stripping him, telling him to bark like a dog, and more. "There were no limits put on this and no boundaries", Schmidt reported. After a few days, the sessions had to be temporarily suspended when Qahtani's heartbeat slowed to 35 beats a minute. "Somewhere", General Schmidt observes, "there had to be a throttle on this", and the "throttle" controlling the interrogation was ultimately Rumsfeld, who was "personally involved", the general stresses, "in the interrogation of one person." Bypassing the normal chain of command, the secretary called the prison chief directly on a weekly basis for reports on progress with Qahtani.

Years before, a G.D. Searle executive had remarked on Rumsfeld's practice of "diving down in the weeds" to check on details, but this was a whole new departure. At one point in Schmidt's description of his interview with the secretary during his investigation, it appears that Rumsfeld was bemused by the practical consequences of his edicts: "Did [I] say 'put a bra and panties on this guy's head and make him dance with another man?'" Schmidt quotes him as remarking defensively. To which Schmidt, in his statement, answers that Rumsfeld had indeed authorized such specific actions by his broad overall approval.

Sometime in mid-August 2003, Rumsfeld took action to deal with the question of "insurgency" in Iraq once and for all. During an intelligence briefing in his office he reportedly expressed outrage at the quality of intelligence he was receiving from Iraq, which he loudly and angrily referred to as "shit", banging the table with his fist "so hard we thought he might break it", according to one report. His principal complaint was that the reports were failing to confirm what he knew to be true – that hostile acts against U.S. forces in Iraq were entirely the work of FSLs ["Former Saddam Loyalists"] and dead-enders. Scathingly, he compared the quality of the Iraqi material with the excellent intelligence that was now, in his view, being extracted from the prisoners at Guantanamo, or "Gitmo," as the military termed it, under the able supervision of prison commander Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller. Rumsfeld concluded his diatribe with a forthright instruction to Stephen Cambone [under-secretary of defense for intelligence] that Miller be ordered immediately to the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, where the unfortunate PUCs [Persons Under Confinement] were ending up, and "Gitmoise it." Cambone in turn dispatched the deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence, Lt. Gen. William Boykin, a fervent Christian fundamentalist given to deriding the Muslims' Allah as "an idol," to Cuba to brief Miller on his mission.

Boykin must have given Miller careful instruction, for he arrived in Iraq fully prepared, bringing with him experts such as the female interrogator who favored the technique of sexually taunting prisoners, as well as useful tips on the use of dogs as a means of intimidating interviewees. First on his list of appointments was Lt. Ricardo Sanchez, who had succeeded McKiernan as the commander of all U.S. forces in Iraq. It must have been an instructive conversation, since within 36 hours Sanchez issued instructions on detainee interrogation that mirrored those authorized by Rumsfeld for use at Guantanamo in December the previous year that gave cover to techniques including hooding, nudity, stress positions, "fear of dogs," and "mild" physical contact with prisoners. There were some innovations in Sanchez' instructions however, such as sleep and dietary manipulation. Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, the overall commander of the U.S. military prison system in Iraq at that time, later insisted that she did not know what was being done to the prisoners at Abu Gharib, though she did recall Miller remarking that "at Guantanamo Bay we learned that the prisoners have to earn every single thing that they have" and "if you allow them to believe at any point that they are more than a dog, then you've lost control of them".

The techniques were apparently fully absorbed by the Abu Ghraib interrogators and attendant military police, as became apparent when photographs snapped by the MPs finally began to surface, initially on CBS News' *60 Minutes* in late April 2004. When Rumsfeld first learned that there were pictures extant of naked, humiliated and terrified prisoners being abused by cheerful Americans, he said, according to an aide who was present, "I didn't know you were allowed to bring cameras into a prison."

It is not clear when Rumsfeld first saw the actual photographs. He himself testified under oath to Congress that he saw them first in expurgated form when they were published in the press, and only got to look at the originals nine days later after his office had been "trying to get one of the disks for

A Word to Our Subscribers

from Becky Grant and Deva Wheeler

After careful consideration here at CounterPunch we have decided that after 14 years it is finally time to adjust our subscription rates. Back in 1863 we would have been able to offer a subscription for significantly less, since postage was only three cents. The sad part is that with the last several issues you may have noticed they have been coming so slow, they might as well have been sent by stagecoach.

A year ago we decided we would try out a media-rate delivery to make up for inflation, but it's kept our phone ringing off the hook with complaints and rightly so, since some of you still haven't received your December issues.

In 1993, at the birth of CounterPunch, a first-class stamp was about 10 cents cheaper then it is now. CounterPunch has been eating the extra expense for quite some time now, not only in printing costs but the costs of doing business altogether. We've added the website, which we hear daily is an invaluable resource to so many of you.

Now we're due for another postage increase this year. After 1836 we didn't see a penny's hike in postage in 89 years. In fact, the rate even dropped to two cents for years at time. In most of our memories, we can recall stamps at ten cents. Now we're up to 42 cents this year, and the mail is just getting slower.

Fortunately, there's an easy solution for most of you. Switch to the email version which is sent to subscribers shortly after the newsletter goes to press and arrives long before the mailed newsletters stumble through the door. We realize the email edition isn't feasible for all of you, so we'll keep the paper edition as long as we can, but meanwhile we encourage you to ask for a sample of the email edition, if you haven't seen it yet. The email edition is sent in PDF format, so if you like reading off a paper, you can print it out and it will look identical to what you'd receive in the mail. The email edition will remain at the discounted price of $35. The paper edition is going to be raised to $45 and the two-year rates for the printed newsletter will cost $80.

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days and days".

The Army's criminal investigation division began a probe on January16, 2004, after Joseph Darby, a soldier not involved in the abuse, slipped the investigators a CD carrying some of the photos. As the CID investigation set to work, Karpinski, according to her later testimony, asked a sergeant at the prison, "What's this about photographs?" The sergeant replied, "Ma'am, we've heard something about photographs, but I have no idea. Nobody has any details, and Ma'am, if anybody knows, nobody is talking." When she asked to see the logbooks kept by the military intelligence personnel, she was told that the CID had cleared up everything. However, when she went to look for herself, she found they had missed something, a piece of paper stuck on a pole outside a little office used by the interrogators. "It was a memorandum signed by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, authorizing a short list, maybe 6 or 8 techniques: use of dogs; stress positions; loud music; deprivation of food; keeping the lights on, those kinds of things," Karpinski said. Over to the side of the paper was a line of handwriting, which to her appeared to be in the same hand and with the same ink as the signature. The line read: "Make sure this happens!!"

Further indications of Rumsfeld's close interest in ongoing events at Abu Ghraib emerged in subsequent court proceedings. In May 2006, Sergeant Santos Cardona, an army dog handler was court-martialed at Fort Meade, Maryland. In stipulated (i.e., accepted by defense and prosecution) testimony, Maj. Michael Thompson, who had been assigned to the 325th Military Intelligence Battalion in the relevant period and reported to Col. Tom Pappas, the battalion commander, stated that he was frequently told by Pappas' executive assistant that "Mr. Donald Rumsfeld and Mr. Paul Wolfowitz" had called and were "waiting for reports". The defense also read aloud stipulated testimony from Steve Pescatore, a civilian interrogator employed by CACI, a corporation heavily contracted to assist in interrogations, who recalled being told by military intelligence personnel that Secretary Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz received "nightly briefings".

The strategy of deflecting responsibility downwards appears to have been crafted in the three desperate weeks that followed the first call for comment on the photographs from *60 Minutes*' producer Mary Mapes. While Gen. Myers bought time with appeals to the broadcasters' patriotism, Rumsfeld's public affairs specialists went into crisis mode under the urgent direction of Larry DiRita, who had taken on Torie Clarke's responsibilities as Pentagon public affairs chief following her departure in April 2003. To help in developing tactics to deal with the storm they knew would break once *60 Minutes* went ahead, DiRita's staff summoned an "echo chamber" of public relations professionals, "all Republicans of course", as one official assured me, from big firms such as Hill and Knowlton to advise them. Naturally, the well-oiled system for delivering the official line through the medium of TV military analysts was brought into play. Retired Army Gen. David Grange, one of the stars of this system, got the tone exactly right on CNN. Responding to a question from Lou Dobbs that though there were six soldiers facing charges, "their superiors had to know what was going on here." Grange responded quickly: "Or they didn't know at all because they lacked the supervision of those soldiers or (were not) inspecting part of their command." In other words, the higher command's fault lay not in encouraging the torture at Abu Ghraib, but simply in failing to notice what the guards were up to.

Meanwhile, Rumsfeld accepted full responsibility without taking any blame, a standard response for high officials implicated in scandal. He said he had no idea what was going on in his Iraqi prisons until Specialist Darby, whom he commended, alerted investigators, though he also claimed that a vague press release on the investigation issued in Baghdad at that time had in fact "broken the story" and alerted "the whole world". (His very specific identification of Darby rendered the previously anonymous whistleblower libel to lethal sanctions from his fellow soldiers.) He said he had written not one but two letters of resignation to President Bush, which were rejected. Gen. Myers testified under oath that he never informed Rumsfeld that he was trying to persuade CBS to suppress their report. When a leaked internal report by Gen. Antonio Taguba detailing how "numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees" at Abu Ghraib had been published in the press and even run on Fox TV a few days after the original CBS broadcast, Feith sent an urgent memo round the Pentagon warning officials not to read it, or even discuss it with family members.

"If you allow them to believe at any point that they are more than a dog, then you've lost control of them."

What Rumsfeld did not mention in all his public protestations of regret over Abu Ghraib was that in the same month of May 2004 he had on his desk a report prepared by the Navy inspector general's office detailing the interrogation methods, refined in their cruelty, being practiced on Jose Padilla and other inmates in the South Carolina naval brig. Padilla, a Puerto Rican former gang member, found himself incarcerated on the direct authority of the secretary of defense, one of three prisoners accused of terrorism held in the jail and subjected to a carefully designed regime of isolation and sensory deprivation. Padilla, according to his attorneys, would ultimately spend 1,307 days in a nine-by-seven-foot cell, often chained to the ground by his wrists and torso and kept awake at night by guards using bright lights and loud noises. In repeated legal arguments, administration lawyers maintained that Rumsfeld was entitled to hold anyone deemed 'an enemy combatant' in his rapidly expanding prison system. CP

Rumsfeld on the River

In 1990, Christopher Meyer, a British diplomat and future ambassador to Washington, was on a five-day river-rafting party through the Grand Canyon. Among his fellow rafters was Donald Rumsfeld. Meyer records that Rumsfeld, in between countermanding the directions of the professional river guide, which he did on a continual basis, "would lecture us interminably on the merits of the artificial sweetener aspartame… His rasping voice would echo from one side of the Canyon to the other." The aspartame lectures ended only when Rumsfeld put his back out hurling buckets of water in an inter-raft water fight. He finished the trip strapped to a chair on the chase boat that also carried the sealed box containing the rafters' "human waste", from which, according to Meyer, "noxious odors began to seep" as the chase boat and its rigid passenger careened down the rapids.

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How Rumsfeld set up America's defeat in Iraq

By Andrew Cockburn

Rumsfeld loved Future Combat Systems (FCS), and would list its development as one of his major accomplishments at the end of his six years at the Pentagon, by which time the overall cost of FCS, as estimated by his own office, had climbed to $307.2 billion. But complex as it was, FCS was only one aspect of a truly esoteric concept of war fighting that flourished under his patronage. It was dubbed Effects Based Operations, or EBO, a theory that emerged from the experience of a group of targeteers on the air staff in the first Gulf War. They believed that precision guidance techniques had made it possible to gauge, and therefore anticipate, the ultimate effects of a bomb targeted on a specific location, which of course could be identified and located thanks to the wonders of the latest surveillance technology. So the destruction of a few critical targets, such as power stations and communications centers, would bring the entire enemy society to a halt. In practice, the bombing campaign against Iraqi infrastructure in 1991 did little to affect the military situation, but it did ruin the civilian economy, guaranteeing the onset of unending misery for ordinary Iraqis.

Given Rumsfeld's sources of military inspiration, not least Andrew Marshall (a former RAND analyst who had displayed a genius for bureaucratic durability in heading up the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment since 1973), it is hardly surprising that he should have been so attracted to Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), a complex of architecturally challenged low-rise buildings across the street from a Wal-Mart in Suffolk, Virginia. The concepts being explored here accepted the premises of the Revolution in Military Affairs and took them to new heights. As with Marshall's original suggestions about the Revolution, the doctrines preached at the Suffolk center took as a fundamental assumption the idea that it was possible to purge warfare of uncertainty and ambiguity, and that war could become simply a mechanistic procedure, in which actions and reactions of the enemy could be effortlessly programmed, anticipated, and dealt with.

They believed that it was possible not only to know everything about the other side's society in all its ramifications and connections, but also to forecast the enemy's reaction to any action against any component of that society, and how that would affect all the other components. Rumsfeld liked this kind of thinking. In December 2001, he sent Gen. Tommy Franks a "snowflake" (an action memo, which Rumsfeld deployed in vast quantities) commending a study called "Shock and Awe" by two defense intellectuals that argued the case for disorientating the enemy's capacity to resist with devastating salvos of munitions precisely targeted at command centers.

Toward the end of the following July, Rumsfeld made a special trip down to Suffolk. He was there to survey preparations for Millennium Challenge 2002, an enormously elaborate war game that its designers – the JFCOM commanders – confidently expected would fully vindicate the arcane theology of EBO, RDO, ONA and PMESII that they preached so enthusiastically. It would also give Rumsfeld something to show, as he said during his visit, "the progress that we have made this far in transforming to produce the combat capability necessary to meet deep threats and the challenges of the 21st Century". Viewing the arrays of computer terminals and esoteric communications equipment, he may well have been reminded of happy times in the COG exercises, waging nuclear war. (COG is the acronym for Continuity of Government, a top secret series of exercises to test the ability of the government to continue to function during and after a nuclear attack. At the start of the 1990s, Rumsfeld was part of the team scheduled to take over the Defense Department if nuclear apocalypse struck. In practice runs Rumsfeld, according to a former senior DoD official, "always wanted to move on to nuclear retaliation as quickly as possible. He was one who always went for the extreme option." Dick Cheney was another regular participant in these rehearsals.)

Escorting Rumsfeld round the premises, in which Millennium Challenge 2002 was to take place, the commanding general, William Kernan, took care to keep his distinguished guest away from a tall, bald-headed man in civilian clothes, for he was the enemy. A retired marine general and Vietnam combat veteran, Paul Van Riper had been called back to command the Red Team in the Millennium war game. In such exercises, the enemy is always red; the U.S. side is always blue. But Van Riper was a twofold enemy. Not only was he playing the role of an opponent, he made no secret of his derisive opinion of the concepts underpinning JFCOM's approach to war.

"The hubris was unbelievable", he told me some years later, after delivering a droll recitation of the full range of acronyms pumped out by the command. "They claimed to be able to understand the relationship between all nodes or links, so for example if something happened to an enemy's economy, they could precisely calculate the effect on his military performance."

In the scenario designed by the exercise planners, Van Riper was playing the role of a rogue military commander somewhere in the Persian Gulf who was willfully confronting the United States. Though there were more than 13,000 troops, as well as planes and ships taking part in the game across the country, much of the action was to occur in computers and be displayed on monitors, the ultimate video game. Thanks to their enormous operational net assessment databases, the Blue Team thought they knew all they needed to know about their

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enemy, and how he would behave. But they were wrong. For a start, they did not know what he looked like. The Blue commander, a three-star Army general, worked in full uniform, surrounded by his extensive staff. Van Riper, dressed in casual civilian clothes, took a stroll, unrecognized, through the Blue Team headquarters area to get the measure of his opponent. With his own staff, he was informal, though he forbade the use of acronyms. "We'll all speak English here," he told them.

In the first hours of the war, the Blue Team knocked out Van Riper's fiber-optic communications, confidently expecting that he would now be forced to use radio links that could be easily intercepted. He refused to cooperate, quickly turning to motorcycle couriers and coded messages in the calls to prayer from the mosques in preparing his own attack. He was no longer performing an assigned part in a scripted play; Van Riper had become a real, bloody-minded, Middle Eastern enemy who had no intention of playing by the rules and was determined to win.

Just a month earlier, the Bush administration had announced a new national security policy of pre-emptive attacks "in exercising our inherent right of self-defense". So, when a Blue Team carrier task force loaded with troops steamed into the Gulf (at least on the computer simulation) and took up station off the coast of his territory, Van Riper assumed that they were going to follow the new policy and attack him without warning. "I decided to pre-empt the pre-empter," he recalled later with satisfaction.

Van Riper was well aware of the U.S. Navy's "Aegis" anti-missile capabilities, and how many missiles it would take to overwhelm them. "Usually Red hoards its missiles, letting them out in dribs and drabs", he told me in retracing the battle. "That's foolish, I did a salvo launch, used up pretty much all my inventory at once." The defenses were overwhelmed. Sixteen American ships sank to the bottom of the Gulf, along with twenty thousand servicemen. Only a few days in, the war was over, and the "transformed" military had been beaten hands down.

For Gen. William Kerner, the JFCOM commander, there could be only one solution to this crisis. Van Riper was informed that the sunken ships had magically refloated themselves, the dead had come back to life, and the war was on again. But this time there would be no surprises. He was not allowed to shoot down Blue Team V-22 troop transports, though these are highly vulnerable planes. The Red Team was ordered to switch on their radars so that they could be more easily destroyed. The umpires announced that Van Riper's missile strikes had been intercepted. In short, the game was now unashamedly rigged to ensure that the U.S. won and all the new theories proven correct. Van Riper resigned as Red leader, but stayed on to monitor the predictable rout of his forces under these new conditions. Afterwards he wrote a scathing report, documenting how the exercise had been rigged and by whom, but no outsider could read it because it was classified as secret. Asked when Van Riper's report would be declassified and released, an embarrassed Gen. Kerner said that it would remain under wraps "until I've had a chance to brief my boss".

His boss, of course, was Donald Rumsfeld, who showed no interest in the report, still less of releasing it to the public. Rumsfeld was interested less in facts or fundamental realities, than "by will and force", pulling all the resources that he could possibly pull together to achieve his goal, which was to show that he could conquer Iraq with a small light force, a truly rapid and decisive operation. This would prove that he had indeed carried out the mandate for transformation, confounding the generals who had dragged their feet and mocked his efforts the year before. His inspiration had already defeated the Taliban; now he would prove his case on the banks of the Euphrates. It did not seem to occur to him that there might be an equally bloody-minded Van Riper, worse, many Van Ripers, waiting on the other side, all equally determined to ignore the rules. Six months later, as the Americans advanced on Baghdad, one of the commanders, Gen. William Wallace, made a plaintive admission. "The enemy we're fighting", he told reporters, "is a bit different from the one we war-gamed against." The remark came close to costing the general his job. CP

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